

The Sleeping Beauty



HAMLYN FAIRY TALES IN COLOUR



Did you know that "The Sleeping Beauty" and other fairy-tales like "Cinderella" were first written in French? They were written by Charles Perrault, who was born in Paris over three hundred years ago. In all his fairy stories, he tries to show us that those who are kind and gentle find true happiness at last.

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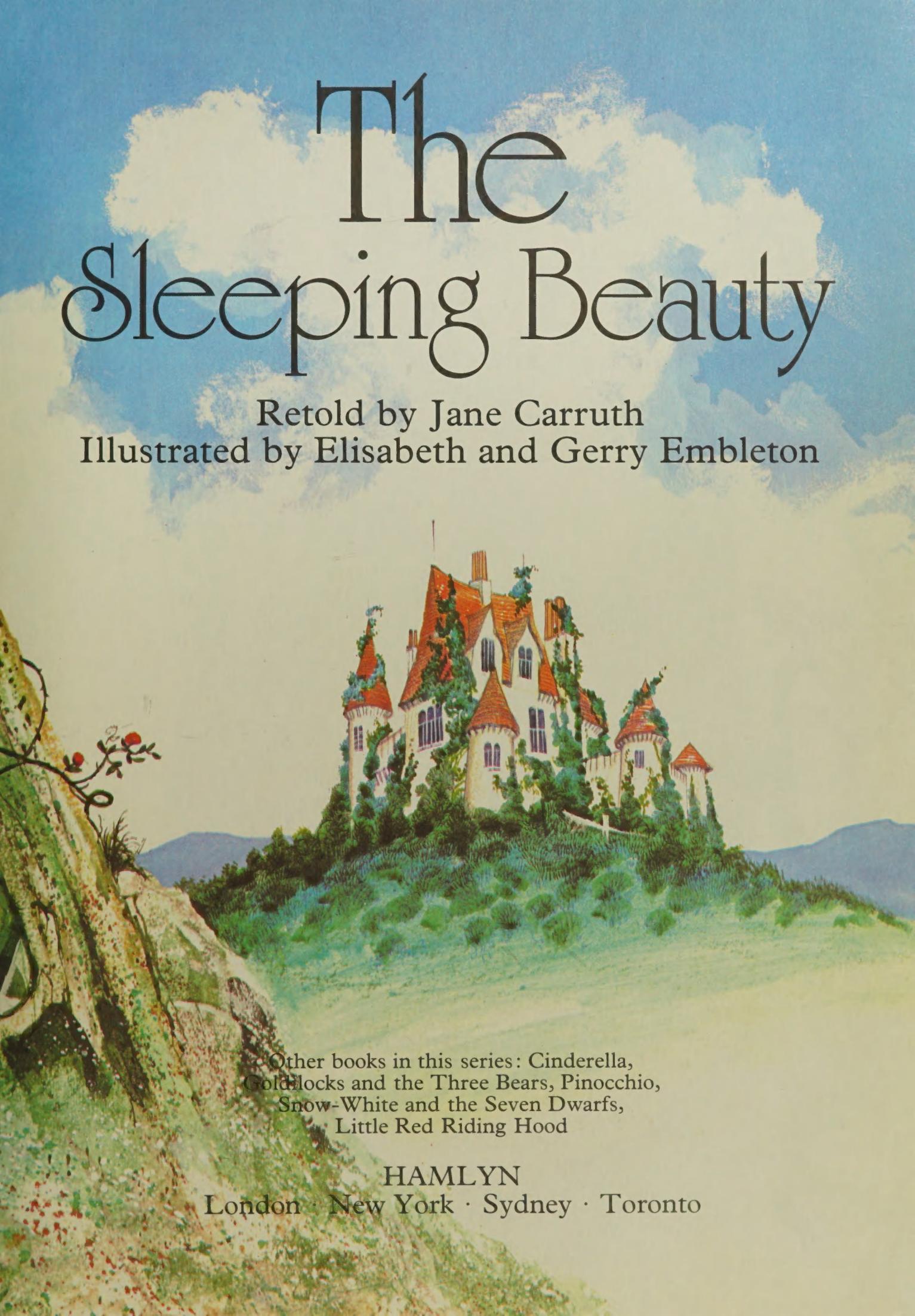
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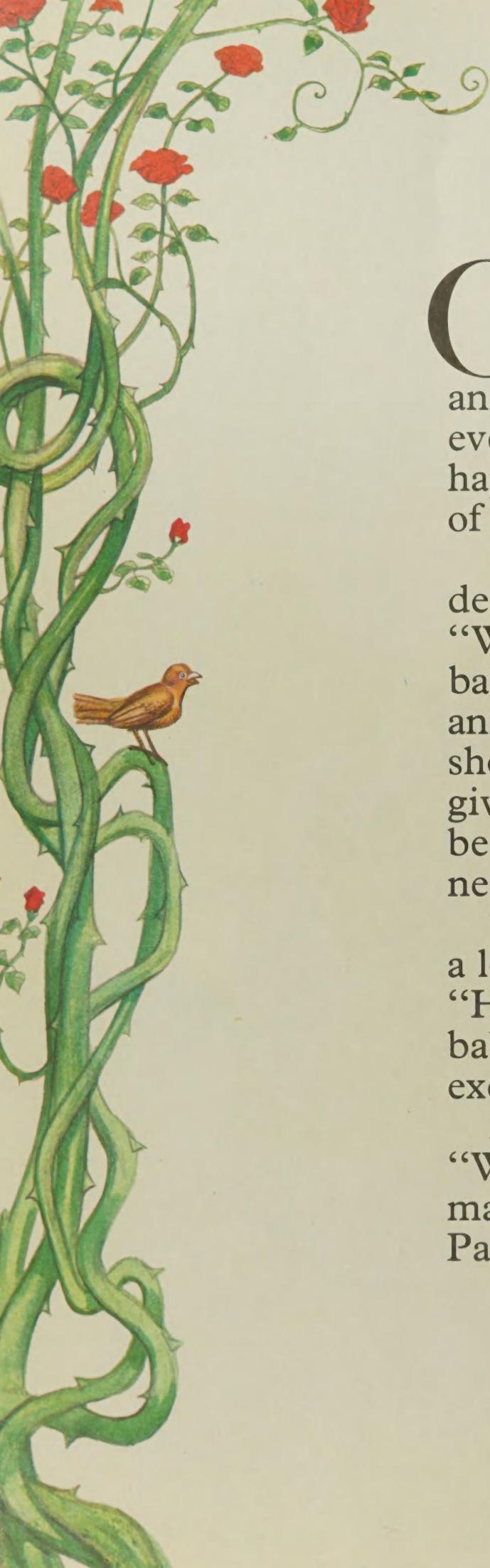
The Sleeping Beauty

Retold by Jane Carruth
Illustrated by Elisabeth and Gerry Embleton



Other books in this series: Cinderella,
Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Pinocchio,
Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs,
Little Red Riding Hood

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Once upon a time, there lived a King and a Queen who had everything to make them happy – except a child of their own.

Then, one day, their dearest wish was granted. “We are going to have a baby,” the happy Queen announced, and the King showed his pleasure by giving the Queen a beautiful diamond necklace.

The baby was born on a lovely summer’s day. “How glad I am that our baby is a girl!” the Queen exclaimed joyfully.

And the King said, “We shall give her a magnificent Christening Party.”



Invitations were sent out to all the most important people in the land.

"We must make sure the Seven Good Fairies come," said the Queen. "They will be godmothers to our child."

On the day of the Christening, guests began arriving at the palace with their gifts. Among them were the Seven Good Fairies.









Each of the Fairies had a very special gift for the baby Princess.

“She will grow up to be kind and gentle,” said one.

“She will sing like a lark,” said another, as they stood around the cot.

“She will be as fair as a rose,” said the third.

“How fortunate we are,” the Queen whispered to the King. “These are wonderful gifts to give to our child.”





Just as the youngest of the Good Fairies was about to step forward, an old and very ugly Fairy appeared among the guests.

Her voice was harsh and shrill and her black eyes blazed with anger as she screeched, "I am the oldest Fairy in the land. How was it that I had no invitation to this grand Christening Party?"

The King and Queen looked at each other in deep dismay. But worse was to come. When the old Fairy looked at the wonderful banqueting table she saw that there were golden caskets for the Seven Good Fairies, but there was no casket set out for her!



In vain, the King and Queen pleaded with her to join them as their honoured guest. But the wicked Fairy shook her head. "I will not stay," she cackled. "But before I go I will give this child of yours a gift – a very special gift. She will die from the prick of a spindle."





A gasp of horror went up from the guests as they heard those dreadful words. Then the youngest of the Seven Good Fairies stepped forward. "The Princess will not die, but fall into a gentle sleep," the Good Fairy cried. "This sleep, from which she must be wakened by a King's son, will last one hundred years . . ."

The next morning, the King issued a Proclamation: "Let it be known," read the Proclamation, "that all the spinners in the land must burn their spinning wheels on pain of death. Every spindle must, this day, be destroyed."





Years passed; the spinning wheel was forgotten. No child who had been born in the same month as the Princess had ever seen one.

And the young Princess herself, who had every grace and beauty, had never heard the words spoken.

She was as lovely as a summer's day and so gentle and sweet that her parents adored her.



One sunny Spring day, the King and Queen decided to take their daughter to one of their oldest castles in the country.

“We shall stay there for a few days,” the King declared. “It will be a pleasant change from the palace.”

The Princess was delighted with the ancient castle, its tall white turrets and narrow winding stairs. And soon she set out to explore the topmost tower.







Up and up she climbed until, at last, she came upon a door that swung gently on its hinges.

Imagine her surprise! When she pushed open the door, she found an old lady, with white hair, sitting at a round wooden wheel!

“What are you doing, good dame?” cried the Princess.

“What a strange looking wheel!”

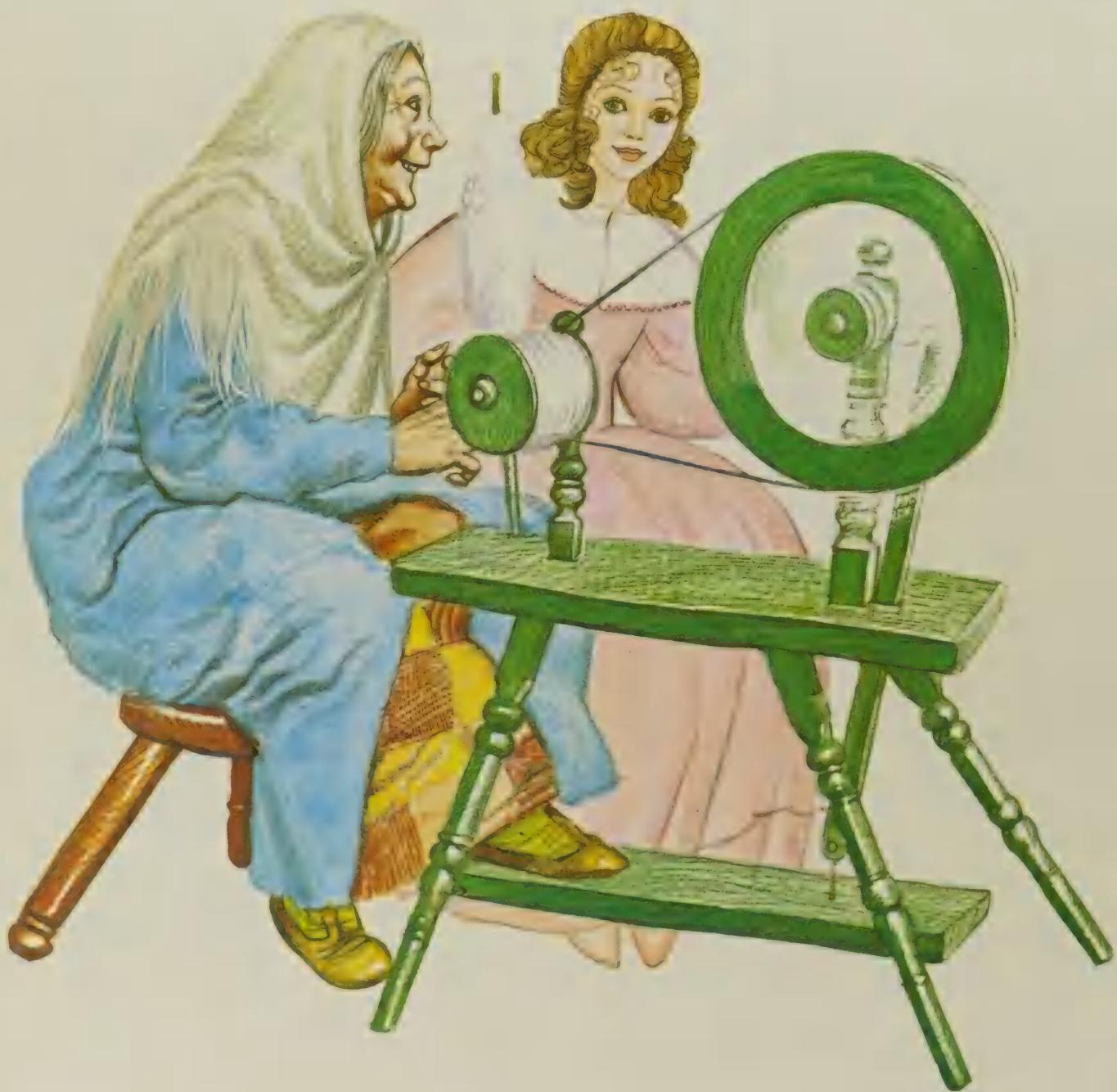
“This is a spinning wheel,” replied the old woman. “And I am spinning . . .”





“Spinning?” the Princess repeated. “That is a strange word. I have never heard it before. Show me how to do this spinning . . .”

The Princess sat down beside the spinner and the old woman told her, “For fifty years or more I have lived in this topmost turret, forgotten by most. But I do not complain . . .”



“I will put an end to your lonely days,” replied the Princess, as she grasped hold of the spindle.

Alas, as she held the spindle she pricked her finger and fell senseless to the ground.



Terrified, the old spinner rushed from the room calling loudly for help.



The King and Queen themselves answered her call, and when they found their lovely daughter stretched out on the floor, they remembered the wicked Fairy's words.

"Lay her on a bed of silver and gold," the King commanded his servants.

"There is nothing we can do."

The Queen wept bitterly whilst this was done, begging her husband to send for the youngest of the Seven Good Fairies. "Perhaps there is some wonderful spell she can weave," she whispered between sobs.





The Good Fairy answered the noble King's summons immediately, riding through the skies in her fiery chariot drawn by three dragons.

“One thing I can do,” she said, as soon as she was inside the castle. “I will send every living thing in this castle fast asleep so that when the young Princess comes out of her own long sleep, she will not find herself alone.”

So then the Fairy touched every living thing in the castle, the kitchen boys, the tall guards, the cooks and the ladies-in-waiting. Then she went out into the courtyard and touched the dogs, the horses in their stables, the grooms and the stable-boys.

Instantly, all fell asleep no matter what they were doing.







After the King and Queen had left the castle, the Good Fairy waved her magic wand and a hedge of bramble and briar sprang up all round the sleeping castle.

Years and years went by. Many a daring young adventurer tried to hack his way through that tangle of briar and bramble but none succeeded.

Then, one day, a handsome young Prince came riding through the forest. When he saw the castle towers he reined in his horse.

“Tell me, old man,” he said to a woodcutter who chanced to be working nearby, “what is the story of that dark, mysterious castle?”

“No one rightly knows,” answered the old man. “But for a hundred years to the day, it has stood there, hiding its secret from the world.”

“Then I shall be the first to discover what lies within those grey stone walls,” cried the young Prince, drawing his sword.



To his astonishment, the brambles parted before him and soon he found himself in the silent courtyard, where men and horses lay fast asleep.

“What strange spell is this?” the Prince asked himself fearfully as he entered the castle and came upon the servants sleeping at their posts.





But all his doubts and fears vanished as he came to a room where, on a bed of silver and gold, lay the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

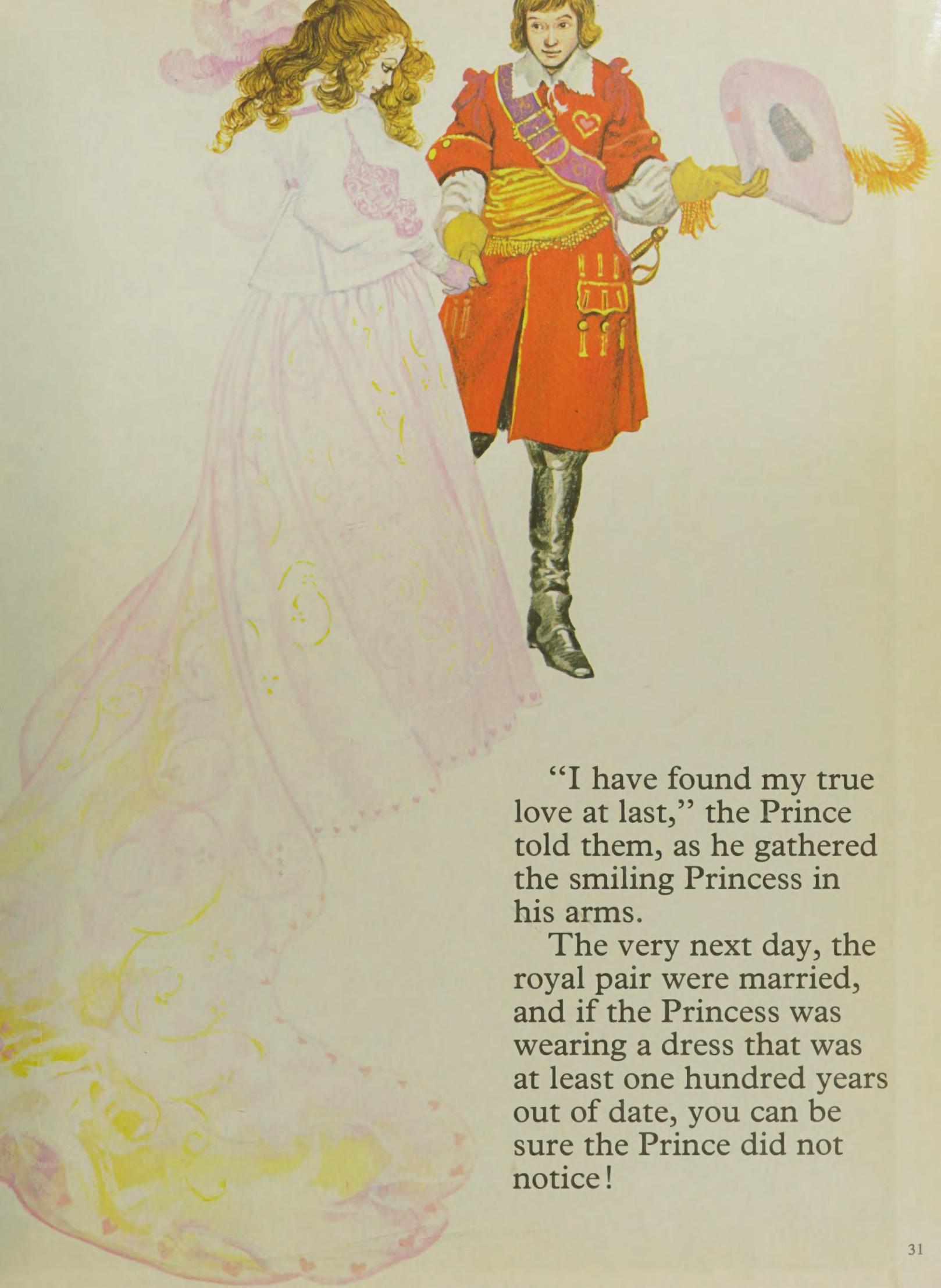
So overcome was the Prince by her beauty that he bent down and kissed her.

The Princess opened her eyes and the spell, which had held her a prisoner in sleep for a hundred years, was broken!



Suddenly, all around them, there was the noise of the castle coming to life. Horses neighed in the courtyard; the cooks in the big kitchen finished chopping vegetables, the seamstress went on with her sewing.

The ladies-in-waiting burst in upon the happy pair who had eyes only for each other.



“I have found my true love at last,” the Prince told them, as he gathered the smiling Princess in his arms.

The very next day, the royal pair were married, and if the Princess was wearing a dress that was at least one hundred years out of date, you can be sure the Prince did not notice!

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